

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 0831

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SW
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT TO US BY PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN

1. I WISH BY THIS MESSAGE TO RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES BY SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER THORBJORN FALLDIN. THE POSSIBILITY HAS BEEN MENTIONED INFORMALLY IN THE PAST, AND WAS INCLUDED IN OUR POLICY ASSESSMENT (STOCKHOLM 690), BUT I WISH TO BRING IT UP NOW IN A FORMAL MANNER, WITH AN EYE TO DISCUSSING THE MATTER WHEN I AM IN WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATIONS IN MID-MARCH.

2. LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT I RECOGNIZE THE SERIOUS DIFFICULTY OF GETTING ONTO THE PRESIDENT'S AND THE SECRETARY'S CROWDED CALENDARS. OBVIOUSLY I WOULD NOT RAISE THE QUESTION UNLESS I THOUGHT AN OFFICIAL VISIT WOULD BE CLEARLY IN THE US NATIONAL INTEREST. NEVERTHELESS I RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE OTHER DEMANDS MORE PRESSING, AND I WISH TO PRESENT WHAT FOLLOWS IN THAT PERSPECTIVE.

3. THE BASIC REASON FOR INVITING FALLDIN IS THAT SWEDEN, WHILE NEUTRAL, IS A MEMBER OF THE WESTERN FAMILY OF NATIONS AND AS THE LINCHPIN OF THE "NORDIC BALANCE" PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM, A FACT OTHER NORDIC OFFICIALS HAVE EMPHASIZED RECENTLY. IT IS IN THE US INTEREST TO UNDERLINE THE TIES BETWEEN SWEDEN

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AND THE US AND TO SHOW OUR RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANT SWEDISH ROLE IN THE NORDIC AREA. DURING THE VIETNAM WAR PERIOD, DESPITE THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN US AND DESPITE A STRONG CONTINUING DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP, OUR RELATIONS BECAME ABNORMALLY COOL. IT IS MY PERSONAL BELIEF THAT SWEDEN'S OPPOSITION TO THE US ROLE IN VIETNAM DID NOT HURT US INTERESTS IN ANY CRITICAL WAY, ALTHOUGH PUBLIC

CRITICISM OFFENDED US OFFICIALS DEEPLY. IN ANY EVENT, SINCE VIETNAM OUR RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED STEADILY, AND ARE NOW EXCELLENT. IN 1976-7 WE EXCHANGED VISITS OF FOREIGN MINISTERS/SECRETARIES OF STATE, OTHER IMPORTANT US VISITORS HAVE ARRIVED HERE REGULARLY, AND WE ARE HOPING THE VICE PRESIDENT WILL VISIT NEXT SUMMER. STILL, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY MUCH IN THE US INTEREST, AS A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR GOOD RELATIONS AND AS AN EARNEST OF FUTURE COOPERATION, TO INVITE THE PRIME MINISTER FOR A US VISIT. AN ADDITIONAL REASON IS THAT THE KING AND QUEEN AND FOREIGN MINISTER WILL VISIT THE USSR THIS SPRING, WHILE FALLDIN GOES TO POLAND: SOME BALANCE IN THE EAST-WEST EQUATION WOULD BE HELPFUL.

4. IF THE USG WISHES TO INVITE FALLDIN, WE SHOULD DO SO FOR THIS FALL, OR NEXT WINTER AT THE LATEST, IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF INTERFERING IN SWEDISH POLITICS (NEXT REGULAR ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 1979). AS WE SAID IN OUR ASSESSMENT, WHILE THERE IS SOME DANGER THE COALITION GOVERNMENT WILL COME APART OVER THE NUCLEAR ISSUE, OUR PRESENT EXPECTATION IS THAT IT WILL REMAIN IN OFFICE THROUGH THE NEXT ELECTIONS. WHILE OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WERE GOOD AND REMAIN SO, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESENT NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IS EXCELLENT AS WELL, AND WE CAN SEE SOME ADVANTAGE IN ISSUING A US INVITATION TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. THE POSSIBILITY
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OF A FALLDIN VISIT TO THE US HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN THE PRESS, AND THOSE CLOSE TO HIM HAVE INTIMATED TO US THAT HE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE AN INVITATION, BUT BY NO MEANS HAVE THE SWEDES BEEN PUSHING THIS MATTER ON US. OF COURSE MANY SWEDES OF ALL POLITICAL PERSUASIONS--AS WELL AS MANY AMERICANS OF SWEDISH DESCENT AND OTHERS--WOULD WARMLY WELCOME A PRIME MINISTERIAL VISIT AS A SIGN OF THE RETURN TO NORMALITY OF OUR RELATIONS.

5. I RECOMMEND THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO EXTENDING AN INVITATION TO FALLDIN TO VISIT THE US IN THE FALL OR WINTER, AND I WOULD BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS THIS FURTHER DURING MY CONSULTATIONS.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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